A LETTER *to a Member of Parliament, in Relation to the* Bill *now depending, for the Repeal of a Clauſe in the Navigation Act.*

K. Q. A.
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SIR,

THE Good Humour You always ſhew, when I lay my Thoughts before You, and the Intimation You gave that You was willing to have them upon this Bill, are my Motives to write freely a ſhort Sketch upon a Subject of which I can't pretend to be a perfect Maſter.

BUT Methinks that every Body ſhould diſtinguiſh between the Neceſſity of this Bill, and what meerly relates to the *Turkey* Company.

POSSIBLY The *Turkey* Company may have committed Faults, and made unfitting By-Laws: I can't tell whether they have done either: But if they have done both, yet this Bill may be neceſſary; and it may be neceſſary to Paſs it this Seſſion.

I Humbly conceive, by what is publiſhed in the Papers, and by what hath been aſſerted on both ſides, That it is pretty evident, That the Silk which is Imported from *Leghorn*, is chiefly purchaſed by *French*, and not *Engliſh* Manufactures. And I am fully perſwaded, that every Man who knows any thing of the World, is ſatisfied, That the *French* Nation is making as great Efforts to gain an Univerſal Trade, as they were lately making to obtain an Univerſal Monarchy.

IF They can obtain an Uuniverſal Trade; If their Merchants can out-manage their Neighbouring Countries, That Monarchy which they aſpired to by their Arms, will be gained by their Arts.

THE *Dutch* were formerly a Poor People; their Government is ſuch an odd Mixture, that Sir *William Temple* could not tell what to call it; nor could he tell how it ſubſiſted; and yet this People, by an extenſive Trade, have been ſo conſiderable as to be courted by all the Potentates of *Europe*. The *French* (whoſe large Tract of very Fertile Land makes them naturally a very conſiderable Nation,) take the ſame way to eſtabliſh their Power: Nor can We obſtruct their dangerous Deſigns, but by making ſuch Laws as will defeat their Induſtrious Contrivances. And it ſeems to me, That in nothing are they more dangerous, than when they endeavour (and *Engliſhmen* come into it) to undermine us in our moſt valuable Staple Commodity, our Woollen Manufactures. They undermine us when, by our own Fellow-Subjects, they can get our Wooll to mix with their own; which all our Laws have been hitherto ineffectual to prevent. But that is a Smuggling Trade. The Grievance now complain'd of, give me leave to ſay, if not hindred, if not effectually redreſs'd, is, as it were, conſented to with our Eyes open, and with ſufficient Warning, and alſo with a Supineneſs, and Intereſted Views, which can ſcarce be accounted for.

ALL That can be Objected againſt the *Turkey* Merchant, may be Remedied, if needful, by another Bill; and We may take our own Time for doing it; for whatever one Subject defrauds another of, is ſtill amongſt our ſelves. If a Company Oppreſſeth, We can Curb and Reſtrain it by future Laws: But if We ſuffer a Foreign Nation to ſupplant us in Trade, We ſhall find it a hard Matter to do our ſelves Right, by applying either to their Good Nature, or Juſtice.

LET Me ſpeak out a little plainly my Mind. This does not ſeem to me a time to deſtroy a Company which has ſo long ſupported the greateſt Exportation of the Woollen Cloth Manufacture, and the other Natural Products of our Country.

TO Call the *Turkey* Company a Monopoly, is giving it a hard Name, which may Bug-bear and Affright ſome well-meaning Men; But, where every Man is a ſeparate Trader, it ſeems a good deal unlike what is uſually called by that Name.

THE Bill before the Houſe is for preventing an Abuſe and Miſchiefs, that is very apparent. Thoſe who are for it, would have the Trade carry'd on by the Antient Channel, which has proved ſo long, ſo Effectually good for *England*. The *Italian* Merchants, who have found out a new Faſhioned way of bringing in *Turkey* Raw Silk, not by Vending Ours, but the Commodities of *France*, endeavour to fruſtrate all Attempts for reſtoring the Antient and well-ſettled way of Importing Raw Silk, by calling a Company (the Members whereof are all diſunited) a Monopoly.

SOME Very worthy Men may be prevailed upon by Nick-Names: But, if this Bill don't Paſs, and that this Seſſion, the Damage may be irretrievable. If the Bill Paſſeth; The Conduct of the *Turkey* Company, all their By-Laws, and even their Charter, if Liable to any juſt Exception, may be Examined afterwards by Parliament.

IF The *Turkey* Company don't Export a ſufficient Quantity of Our own Produce: If they don't Import a ſufficient Quantity of Raw Silk: If they ſet exceſſive Prices on the Goods they bring home: If there be hereafter any juſt Complaints againſt them, all theſe Matters will be ſubject to the Cognizance of the Legiſlature, who will certainly give ſuch redreſs therein as the Occaſion ſhall require. But ſure all that can be ſaid, or propheſied againſt them at this Time, is no Argument, can be no Argument, againſt this Bill. If the *Italian* Merchants have, or ſhould bring home the Products of *Aſia*, in return for *French*, and not *Britiſh* Manufactures, ſhould We not be Cheated by Words?

WE Ought not to be Cheated, even by Popular Maxims. We ought not to be Run away with. Monopolies are certainly wrong; but to call every ſort of Company ſo, let the Reaſons for Erecting it be what they will, is as certainly a Miſtake. And whoever without Doors uſeth that Language in all Caſes, (I ſay without Doors, for I know every Member within hath Liberty to make uſe of what Diction he pleaſeth on ſuch a Subject) ſeems to me a little too Self-ſufficient.

UNLESS A Man hath been upon the Place, he cannot pretend to know how neceſſary, or how needleſs, a Company is, to carry on a Trade under the abſolute, the moſt abſolute Monarchy of *Turkey*; where every Foot of Land is the *Sultan's*, and every Subject ſuch a Vaſſal, as makes himſelf Rich and Conſiderable, meerly by ſqueezing, as far as he can, every Man who is in his Power; Tho' that Vaſſal himſelf cannot, at laſt, call any thing he hath his own, for ſo much as one ſingle Moment. Moſt *Engliſh* Men, who are ſo happy as to live under a Free-Government, can judge but indifferently how Trade is to be Managed under one that is ſo entirely Abſolute, that Foreign Merchants, as well as their own Natives, too often feel the Effects of its Avarice and Cruelty.

I Will add but one thing more, which is, That it is ſurprizing, That ſince the *French* Court put out an Arret ſo long ago as 1701, to Prohibit the *Engliſh* Merchants from Importing *Turkey* Goods, our Legiſlature never yet took notice of it, or were not ſooner alarmed.

I am,

SIR, Your Humble Servant,

A. B.